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ABSTRACT

Studied was the development of the school subject English in the Norwegian compulsory elementary and junior high school system, stressing the period of 1945 to 1970. Historically, the relation of educational reform to the school subject English is described with identification of the influencing forces and mediating agencies. This report is concerned with the curriculum development, change and implementation affecting the societal, the substantive, and the technical/professional domains of the school subject English. Discussed is the role of research and practice in influencing and shaping decisions concerning the development, change, and implementation. Appended are 27 references. (SI)

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THE MAKING OF A SCHOOL SUBJECT: A DISCUSSION ON THE
INTERDEPENDENCE OF RESEARCH AND PRACTICE DRAWN FROM
CONCLUSIONS OF A STUDY INTO RECENT CURRICULUM HISTORY

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Introduction

The aim of my paper is to discuss some conclusions from a research project into recent curriculum history. In the Nordic countries curriculum history is emerging as an educational field of study emphasizing the history of school subjects in a socio-political perspective as well as in a more discipline and culture orientated context.¹ One realizes that a historical approach to matters of curriculum may contribute towards a fuller understanding of today's curricular problems. Insights are gained by clarifying the antecedent parameters of today's practice, giving special attention to preceding conflicts over the intentions and consequent content of schooling, as evidenced by the written curriculum and by statements preceding the official documents.²

The Study

The study involved is concerned with the defining and redefining of English as a school subject in the Norwegian compulsory elementary and junior high school, stressing the period between 1945 and 1970.³ The aim of the study has been to clarify the development of the school subject English in relation to educational reform in general, and specifically to curriculum revision.

The underlying research interests are historical as well as theoretical. The research methodology employed has been mainly historical. That implies investigation of archive material like correspondence, drafts, reports, minutes from meetings etc. not publicly known, but important to get a full picture of the development.

From an historical point of view, the intention has been to identify and describe influencing forces and mediating agencies. Some pertaining questions have been:

- what part did the school subject English play as part of and as a means in the politically initiated and implemented educational reform

- what were the main societal, political, educational, linguistic and psychological influences, and what part did educational research play
- through which national, Nordic, and international channels (organizations, institutions, groups, persons) was influence exerted
- what were the main characteristics of the practical aspects of the process leading to the changing and reformulating of the curriculum for English teaching

From a theoretical point of view it has been of interest to test current curriculum theory on a historical-empirical material. The material encompass a series of studies of which the main are :

- a study of the main features of the emergence of "English" in the common school from the 1880s to 1954
- an investigation of the innovative programs, curriculum and projects in the 7-year common school from 1954 onwards, including pilot research programs of "English" in the 9-year basic school
- an analysis of the theoretical climate of foreign language teaching in the fifties and early sixties including an account of the influence exerted by institutions and organizations like the British Council, the Norwegian Council for Innovation and Research in Schools, the English Teachers' Association among others
- an account of the rapid development from the mid-sixties till the mid-seventies with its dominant influences, like educational technology, behaviorial learning psychology, and "the structural approach" in foreign language teaching, mediated by agents like the Council of Europe, the Nordic Cultural Commission, and the Norwegian Council for Innovation and Research in Schools
- a study of the practice of curriculum development resulting in a new national curriculum for the teaching of English as part of a new national prescribed curriculum "

As to testing curriculum theory, the theories in question have been the conceptional system of John I. Goodlad, "the practical" of Joseph J. Schwab and reproduction theory linked, among others,

to the writings of Basil Bernstein and Ulf P. Lundgren.⁶

A more critical overarching theoretical framework for analyzing reproduction theory has been found in reconceptualist curriculum theory like the writings of Henry Giroux, and in theory generating from curriculum history studies - like the theorizing of Ivor F. Goodson.⁶

The study of sources and the identification and verification of relevant facts, events and phenomena and the consequent interpretation pertaining to these facts, events and phenomena has been sustained and enlightened by curriculum theorizing based on curriculum history.⁷ Curriculum theory generated from curriculum history combined with a hermeneutical approach, stressing an understanding of the historical, personal and situational context of the facts, events and phenomena in question, may lead to important insights of practical and theoretical significance concerning the past and present of curriculum and schooling.⁸ It may also imply a reframing of curriculum theory.

An additional research interest has been to contribute towards a research-based "subject didactics", a newly implemented component in teacher education in Norway claiming for teacher training to be research and basic knowledge orientated.⁹

Some Conclusions or Assumptions

On the basis of the reports from the study certain conclusions or assumptions are put forward in the form of tentative theses for further investigation. Seen isolated from the related material, they may seem selfevident, tautologist or even of a common sense nature. They may, however, contribute to a fuller understanding of the way the content of schooling are defined and redefined, negotiated and operationalized even if they are tentative :

- the development of "English" was an integral part of major curriculum issues pertaining to the development of the common basic school
- legitimation was changing and often ambiguous
- not only English language and culture, but also structural linguistics, behaviorial psychology and educational technology

had a marked influence

- the direct impact from educational research was insignificant
- the role of national and international political pressure was predominant
- international institutions and organizations acted as agents for the development
- the impact of individual persons and subgroups was decisive
- innovations initiated centrally were interpreted and redefined at a micro level
- problems of curriculum reform and revisions became manifest through implementation
- change was incremental

The Focus of the Paper

The focus of the present paper is the relationship of research and practice inherent in the above quoted conclusions. What was the role of practice and what was the role of research and was there any interdependence between the two?

To bring forth some kind of answer, it is necessary to reframe the question or approach. First, however, we must clarify what is meant by research and what is meant by practice.

Research in the present context indicates research based theory, results and strategies pertaining both to educational research and to research affiliated other disciplines constituting the academic framework of the school subject English like linguistics, learning psychology etc. It also includes the researchers in question.

By practice is meant the practical teaching and learning reality and context of the school subject, and the pertaining educational environment or praxis with its inherent prevalent curriculum, teacher and school "codes", including as it were the practitioners of the field at different curricular levels.¹⁰

We are in the paper concerned with a case of curriculum development, change and implementation effecting the societal, the substantive and the technical/professional domains of the school subject in question.¹¹ It is of interest to discuss the role played by research and practice in influencing and shaping

decisions concerning this development, change and implementation. Is any impact from research discernable or did conventional wisdom and common sense strategies prevail altogether? What are the levels of curricular practice with their mediating agents that were most influential concerning the different stages of the curriculum process - effecting consequently either the formal, the operational or experienced curriculum? What part did the prevalent official school policy or school ideology play - representing the socio-political level of practice?

In order to answer these questions, attention will be paid to certain key issues and stages of the development lending themselves, as it were, well to scrutiny as to theorizing.

Innovation Drawn Between School Politics, Research and Praxis 1955-1960s

By the end of the second world war "English" in the Norwegian 7-year common school was still an optional subject. It was predominantly a "closed" option - open only to the pupils found "adequate" or "fit". The main function of the subject was to serve as a selection agency for high school. A major problem was how to select for admission to English classes.

The end of the 1940s witnessed the blooming of American test psychology, and it became accepted that an I.Q. of 90 somehow represented a limit for the intellectual capacity required. The newly established (1939) Institute for Educational Research at Oslo University made adaptation of American tests possible, and a special prognostic test was also constructed.

There was, however, considerable political unrest concerning the elitist taint and the undemocratic selection procedures not worthy a common school, especially within the ranks of the Social Democratic Party. It was therefore not unexpected that the teaching of English in the compulsory 7-year school, became one of the first targets during the coming period of school reforms.

The 1954 Act of Innovation in Education

By the mid-fifties Norway like the other Nordic countries was

facing long overdue school reforms and curriculum revisions. The passing of the 1954 Act of Innovation in Education, opened the way for extensive organizational and curricular "experimentation" by allowing prescribed regulations to be set aside.

The setting up of quasi experimental designs to try out "English for Everybody" in the 7-year common or basic school started immediately after the establishment of the National Council for Innovation in Schools, and spread rapidly throughout the country.

Other quasi experimental projects followed now related to English as a compulsory subject of a 9-year basic school. Still, however, two kinds of English teaching were envisaged: for general contact purposes and as a prerequisite and basis for secondary education. This made imperative the question of selection and differentiation and the problems of a suitable curriculum.

"...On a Scientific Basis"

It was never doubted that the true answers to questions like: When start English teaching? When and how to differentiate? What are the best selection procedures? Early versus late differentiation, would be revealed. These being the heydays of experimental school research and test psychology, it was explicitly stated in the official documents that only such educational research was intended that was systematically designed and controlled, and where the results could be analyzed by advanced statistical procedures.

Natural would-be partners in a big scale research enterprise to show the future way to go, were according to the same documents, members of the academic staff of the Institute for Educational Research. They alone had the expertise necessary to produce prognostic tests for selection and differentiation, achievement tests for comparing results and statistical help for analyzing research findings.

The teachers and the local school authorities had apparently no serious objections to the extensive use of tests in the experimental programs. On the contrary, they were more or less convinced that this was necessary to secure a reliable and valid

foundation on which to build the future teaching of English in compulsory schooling. A belief that was shared by school-politicians and administrators alike, and nurtured by the experts on educational research.

The results based on the statistical analysis of the material from the different experimental programs, proved to be an anticlimax, giving no secure knowledge whatsoever. It was e.g. impossible on the basis of the data available to tell the best starting point for early English teaching.

A "Miracle" Plan or Guideline for the "Teaching of English for Everybody"

Even if the aim was compulsory English for all pupils, two types of teaching of English were envisaged with two different sets of objectives and consequently different curricula or content. The problem of a suitable curriculum guideline was believed solved by adopting and adapting the already existing Swedish Guideline for the programs of innovative English teaching. Needless to say the adherence to such a plan was vital to the implementation of English teaching more adjusted to the capacities and potential of the greater part of the pupils.

Reactions from a Grass Root Level

Parents, teachers, school authorities and school politicians alike accepted large scale experiments as necessary means in the democratization process of English in compulsory education., and the official reports to the Storting give evidence of general satisfaction. The archive material, however, especially the correspondence between the central and local school authorities tell a different story, revealing grave misunderstandings, deeprooted controversies and bitter fight for control over the aims and nature of the planned and implemented experiments.

Everybody wanted for instance experiments carried out in class 5. The local community representatives, having experienced the pain of discrimination caused by former selection procedures, wanted all pupils in class five to take part. The Council for

Innovation, was, however, set on trying out different models of differentiation , and as a consequence, wanted three different groups based on the outcome of tests and teacher assessment.

The situation became drastic when Oslo was involved. Here experiments were wanted in order to test if three years of teaching English starting in class 5 would give the same results as starting in class 6 - keeping the total teaching hours the same. According to the Council for Innovation this was not an experiment worthy of support - especially when the Oslo authorities refused any ability grouping before class 7. Moreover they refused to accept the less academic curriculum for the less able students. On the contrary Oslo was at this time well on its way towards an organizationally undifferentiated teaching of English for all pupils within the national curriculum .The local authorities were, by the way, the winners this time, strongly supported by the English Teachers' Association.

It is also clear that certain tensions were created by the different approaches of teachers on one side and the central authorities on the other , to the experiments. The teachers were only vaguely interested in the democratization of the teaching of English in a political sense. They were , however, keenly interested in a pedagogically better teaching and learning - suitable to more pupils, and not only as an entrance requisite for secondary schooling.

One of the greatest difficulties in implementing a teaching of English according to the new curriculum , was the inability of the teachers to understand the curriculum guidelines and to base their own teaching on it. According to archive material, this was a constant complaint creating tensions between the central innovation authorities and their local implementers:

Everywhere it seems, the teachers have difficulties in changing their teaching from a traditional teaching of English towards a teaching in accordance with the principles of the Plan for English for Everybody".¹²

All the same - the early experiments with a teaching of English from class 5 with the greater part of the pupils taking part and profiting from a less academic curriculum and more progressive

teaching methods, proved to make a decisive impact on the future development of the teaching of English for beginners.

The reaction of teachers and parents were positive. The reports of supervisors and inspectors were optimistic and encouraging. English from class 5, and for all pupils, had come to stay.¹³

The State of the Art: Impact and Influencing Forces from 1945 till Early 60s

A Specific British Influence

It is a matter for discussion to what extent the English language teaching of Palmer, West and Hornby constituted a specific British tradition different from the American one. If so it is easily overlooked when the story of the development of English language teaching is told.¹⁴ In their language teaching they succeeded to combine the systematic and the intuitive, as well as the pragmatic and the eclectic, and in this way avoided dogmatism.

It became the foundation on which Norwegian textbook writers built when from the end of the fifties a new era of material for teaching English as a foreign language started. Palmer, West and Hornby were, of course not the only ones. But the way Palmer, West and Hornby seemed to fuse personal experience in language teaching with theoretical considerations, together with their impact on the field, make them representative in our context .

It was problematic that this kind of language teaching demanded a great deal from the practicing teacher in terms of personal skill in using the language, as well as in applying techniques of teaching. It also demanded fantasy and intuition to a degree that may have been wanting for the greater part of Norwegian language teachers. (The parallel to the Direct Method some decades earlier is obvious.)

The work of the British Council in materializing the language teaching of especially the Hornby era, is unique. It may be argued that it was all cultural propaganda as part of cultural imperialism, and as such dubious. It met , however, urgent needs

for information and in-service training on the part of the ordinary language teacher as well as of the academic staff of Colleges of Education and university teacher training institutions. And it made available expert advice and concrete help on the levels of policy making and decision. It also made an impact on the professional climate and milieu surrounding foreign language teaching in Norway. And this was especially due to the British consultants who, subsidized by the British Council, were attached to the Ministry of Church and Education as expert advisers for the teaching of English.

Connoisseurs of Their Craft

It is not easy to assess the impact of the work of the first British English consultants. The ordinary language teacher was impressed and to a certain degree amused. It is symptomatic that one of the consultants once in a report complained that the teachers looked upon his demonstration teaching as entertainment. One way to see it is to say that the consultants were true "connoisseurs" of their craft, combining theory, experience and intuition. They knew from experience what worked in the classroom. They had grasped the essentials of Palmer and Hornby, and they managed to take advantage of the specific in the situation they happened to be in.

Their impact on teacher training is a fact. Questions of teaching methods and language skills like intonation and pronunciation were given priority because of their intervention.

They exerted a specific influence on examination tests and teaching material, and they were personally engaged in developing and producing teaching material, as did other policy makers of the field.

It is, however, a fact, that not everybody on the level of policy-making and decision-taking favoured their advice. A certain strain is noticeable in the relationship between the Council for Innovation and the consultants, and there are instances where their advice is overlooked.

Their strongest influence was exerted on the academic milieu of English language teaching in Norway. Here the manifest effect

is noticeable in textbooks and teacher training, and in the influence they exerted personally as models, inspirators and mediators.

This was especially evident in the case of the Oslo English Teachers' Association.

Not just Tea and Talk: Pressure Group and a Forum for Professional Activities

We may look upon the story of the Oslo English Teachers' Association as a story telling the influence of people involved on micro level or the level of practice.¹⁵

When the story of a school subject is told, this aspect is often left out to the advantage of macro explanations, like the demands of society and the more general educational development.

Relations of this last kind should, of course, not be neglected. They enable us to see the historic and social setting of the development of a school subject, taking into account political, economic as well as ideological relations.

We need, however, also the story of how relations concerning status, professional identity, and how teacher knowledge and teacher thinking influenced the development.

The story of the Oslo English Teachers' Association demonstrates how decisions of a societal and ideological kind regarding a school subject are interpreted and redefined on a micro level by people actively engaged in the distribution of the "products" of the subject in question.

An important factor in itself was the formation of a professional association. In this way the story is also a documentation of the influence exerted by a subject group on the development of the school subject in question.

Towards a Change of Paradigma in Foreign Language Teaching: Early Sixties till Mid Seventies

The American Influence and the Role of the Council of Europe

The period experienced an impact of influencing forces more intense and extensive than ever before or after in the history of

the teaching of modern languages in Europe, and perhaps especially in the Nordic countries. The linguist Peter Strevens has pointed to the international significance:

One of the major social and educational changes taking place throughout the world in the second half of the twentieth century is a revolution in the learning and teaching of languages¹⁶

Strevens argues that the changes are parallel to the changes that took place when the textile industry changed from being a craft to "an applied science backed by a technology". And he claims that the changes in modern language teaching were of the same kind because we see "the application of scientific knowledge and techniques assisting the personal art of the teacher".

A question that may seem relevant is "what happened to the personal art of the teacher". Did it survive or was it never threatened? Was there, indeed, an interdependence in practice?

It is difficult to answer these questions, but research is needed. It is, however, far more easy to point to the circumstances indicating that structural linguistics, behaviorial psychology and instructional technology joined forces to create a new era of foreign language teaching sponsored by an enthusiastic and optimistic international climate. And the catalyst in Europe was the work of the Council of Europe in the field of modern languages.¹⁷

It is quite remarkable to notice that now it was the European linguists that were involved, especially French, British and Swedish ones. They brought forward the thesis of linguistic description as the starting point and basis for teaching and learning programs. At the same time the application of the structural approach linked especially to American applied linguistics like the works of Robert Lado and Charles Fries, was justified psychologically by behavioristic learning theory and practically through the new technology of the audiolingual method. It was "Next Year Jerusalem", using David Hawkrige famous title from 1976.¹⁸ The ethical and moral justification was the democratization of education: the inherent rights of

everybody to master a foreign language.

The scene of the foreign language conferences of the Council of Europe became the meeting place of differing interests: the political and school-political interest of socialist progressivism, the pedagogical and subject-related economic interest of the expert teacher or consultant preparing his or her series of teaching material, the theoretic and technical interest of expert linguists or psychologists experiencing the applications of their research efforts, and the pragmatic interest of the bureaucrat seeing at last some sort of way to solve overriding problems tied to the implementation of English in a new more egalitarian school system.

In retrospect it is apparent that the experts and their "bandwagons", rhetoric and mixed interests got their way too easily, and dominated too much the scene of activity.

It is also a fact that instructional objectives of an operational nature easily adaptable to evaluating procedures and in compliance with the audiovisual method, were given priority over general aims and a more cultural content in the recommendations from the Modern Language Teaching Conferences of the Council of Europe .

Intentions and Realities or Trial and Error

A survey of the extensive research and developmental work that took place within the field of English language teaching in the Nordic countries during the sixties and the first years of the seventies, confirms that the tendencies from USA were echoed, and that the recommendations from the Council of Europe were taken seriously, adapted to the specific Nordic situation.

The research and development projects focused especially on problems essential to the implementation of school reform like the optimal starting point for foreign language learning, the question of individualization and differentiation to avoid ability grouping, the question of "implicit or explicit", the use of language laboratories and audiovisual aids, to mention some.

A certain degree of discrepancy existed between the different Nordic countries on most issues. Sweden pioneered as far as

the starting point was concerned. It became, however, generally accepted that foreign language teaching from the age of 9-10 was possible - and had its advantages. Danger was, however, signalled from the rows of the practical teachers as to extensive and prolonged use of audiovisual aids for pupils of this age.

Consequently, it was possible to stop in time to prevent too great investment and damage done. A conclusion that also may be applied to the role of language laboratories in our country. There were no doubts as to their effectiveness. But comparing, the reactions and comments in Norway are much less enthusiastic than in Sweden. Of course, there was a tremendous difference in economic investment.

The kind of research that took place to find solutions to the problems of differentiation and individualization, demonstrates a discrepancy of notions about ability grouping in the Nordic countries. It is symptomatic that in Denmark no such projects were undertaken. In Finland and Sweden the problem was how to make it work, in Norway how to get rid of it. Here the research and development projects aimed at trying out non-ability grouping.

The rather fierce debate and intensive research in Sweden on "explicit and implicit" in the teaching and learning of foreign languages, was due to the official launching of the audiolingual method as well as to the existence of wellgrounded theoretical objections and more, we may say, practical considerations.¹⁹ That the research results proved inconclusive, opened up for a continuing eclectic attitude regarding theory and research based foreign language teaching methodology.

Summing up Notes on the Decision-Making and Decision-Taking Process of Curriculum Making

The process of decision-making and decision-taking is demonstrated throughout the different case studies of the project. Relating to the stated assumptions and to the exemplifications given, it is possible to sum up and elaborate certain points relevant to the focus of the present paper:

The development of the school subject English was linked to certain major curriculum issues pertaining to the general development of the common school revealing extra-disciplinary factors more than innate ones to influence decisions about the role and content of the subject.

The rhetoric of a changing and ambiguous legitimization is evidenced as is a discrepancy between the formal explicit justification and the implicit one as a basis for decision making.

Ideologically and politically based motives were more predominant than officially stated and publicly recognized.

Structural linguistics, behaviorial psychology and instructional technology combined forces to create a new era of foreign language teaching.

Research results seemed not in any decisive way to influence the decisions of school politicians and administrators. Applied research in the form of technology did, however, prove useful as an envisaged means of implementing the officially initiated reforms and revisions.

The mediating influence of international institutions and organizations was decisive in matters of policy concerning political aims as well as subject matter like content and methods.

There is a marked influence of individual people and subgroups. The role of people in key positions exerting power and control when decisions are taken, is an astonishing phenomenon. The same is the role of individual people acting as models and inspirators, like in the case of the English consultants - affecting the whole milieu of foreign language teaching. The work of the Association of English Teachers is unique in terms of substantial attainments and professional influence.

What was told in "Moscow" was , however, redefined locally at micro level by school administrators, teachers and parents alike. That goes for politically initiated efforts at democratization as well as for curriculum guidelines .

The need for reform and innovation was by the central school authorities assumed beyond discussion and to be universally accepted. A progressive curriculum in the form of an elaborate set of guidelines was considered adequate to bring

about fundamental change. The problem of implementation of change was to a large extent unheeded, but came soon to the surface, dispersing the mist of optimism and revealing the dogmatism of reality - inherent in any process of change related to education and schooling.

Change did , however, occur. It happend in an incremental way due to joint forces like in-service training, new attitudes in teacher training , new teaching material and the like. During the period in question teachers did adjust their teaching to a changing curriculum as well as to the changing structure of a new school system. But it did not happen over night as a result of a new set of guidelines.

The Interdependence of Curriculum Practice, Curriculum Research - and Curriculum Theory : A Tentative Discussion

Four questions is raised as an approach to discussing the relationship between curriculum practice, curriculum research and curriculum theory on the basis of the material from the study:

What is the nature of curriculum problems?

What is the scope of the curriculum field?

May reproduction theory contribute to an understanding?

How does change take place?

Uncertain or Procedural Practical Problems

It is argued that while the practicability of curriculum problems may seem indisputable, differing points of view about the strategy of solving the problems may occur. On the basis of the material from the research project, it is indicated that arts of the practical in the Schwabian sense seem more appropriate to the practical nature of curriculum problems than a strategy modeled on educational technology. Even if only slight research exists to prove the point, there is an intuitive feeling that Schwabs thinking succeeds in bringing to the surface essential existential phenomena related to curriculum praxis. Curriculum practice is not characterized by defining objectives and selecting means to reach them. It is a situation of negotiation where

one gives and takes: a situation that calls for deliberation and prudence.

There is a link between the Practical of Schwab to "Der Primat der Praxis" of German "geisteswissenschaftliche" curriculum theory on especially two points: stressing the importance of a full understanding of praxis as the starting point for curriculum theorizing, and in advocating an eclectic use of theories to understand and formulate alternatives to be applied on the solving of curricular problems.

The Scope and Levels of Decision-Making

In view of the examples from the material underlining the complexity of the curriculum field and of the interactional forces influencing the levels of curriculum decisions, one may argue that only a generative conceptual system is adequate as a starting point for inquiry and analysis about curriculum practice.

To a certain extent Goodlad's conceptual system may be a useful approach, and the material gives ample evidence of curricular activities pertaining to different curriculum domains and levels, indicating the usefulness of his system to grasp the complexity of the field and the existing interdependence and interaction.

The importance attached to the technical/professional domain by Goodlad, seems especially relevant. A widening up of the curriculum area beyond the substantive domain is most useful in a national context where a conception of curriculum practice has been limited very much to that domain.

Relevant is also his distinguishing between the different aspects of curriculum like the ideological, the formal, the perceived, the implemented and the experienced curriculum. The material demonstrates fully this process of interpretation and redefining each time a new set of guidelines were given for the teaching of English.

Related to a historic-empirical study like the present one, it seems, however, that Goodlad's conceptual system is more appropriate for organizing and systematizing than as a starting point for investigation.

Limitations of Theories of Reproduction

It is beyond discussion that theories of reproduction represent a contribution to understanding the relationship between society and education, but there are also limitations involved.

The point made by Henri Giroux that theories of reproduction neglect the dialectic interaction between structure and human agency is supported by the research context accounted for.²⁰ The micro level of curriculum praxis is not without influence. There are forces actively intervening on the levels of school policy, and on the institutional and instructional levels as well.

There is resistance in the local milieus when reforms go too far or not far enough. Individual people like the English consultants manage to bring about change, and people in key positions manage to control situations - for better or worse. Interventions from subject groups make an impact.

Giroux argues for a "theory of resistance" indicating the existence of forces at micro level who through rebelling and protesting further development. Resistance becomes in this context a theoretical and ideological "construct" making possible analysis of aspects of the relationship between school and society.

The present study confirms the relevance of Giroux' thinking. The active participation by individuals and subgroups represents tokens of resistance and counterefforts breaking the picture of passive domination painted by theories of reproduction. The spell of unavoidable determinism is dispersed giving way to "culture, self-formation and hope through the intervention of human agency".²¹

"Ca change tout le même"

In spite of the above assertions, the present study underlines the problematics of school reform through curriculum revision. Existing naive optimism as to the effects of new curriculum guidelines is revealed. Existing unshrinkable faith

in teacher willingness to and potential for change is demonstrated, as is the existing belief in the miracle of educational technology especially as teacher' aids. These findings in many ways support recent research on curriculum innovation, implementation and evaluation focusing on problems and conflicts inherent in school innovation and change.²²

There are , however, seen over time, signs of change and innovation. It is change of an incremental kind not easily discerned unless seen in a longer perspective.²³ Whether the change is for better or worse, is a normative question. But the fact that change does happen, and that this change is dependant on human mediation in interaction with structural conditions, makes it possible to say: "Ca change tout le même." There is change after all.

Teacher Qualifications and "Subject Didactics"

The issue under question : What does a teacher of foreign languages need to know - is treated relating the tradition of didactics as a discipline in teacher training to a more newly developed "fackdidaktik" (area didactics) in Swedish teacher training and educational research.

The Swedish notion is repudiated not only in view of its non-traditional stress on the learning process, but also because of its neglect of a holistic didactic approach including the broad spectre of a school subject's tangent points and impact. This point of view is supported by data from the study. On the same basis it is asserted that a historical perspective seems necessary to make teachers able to problematize and reassess the role and function of the school subject in the terms of the present situation. And that applies to the justification for teaching methods as well as for what counts as knowledge.

Concluding Remarks as to the Relevance of Curriculum History to Curriculum Theory

A Social Story and a Story of Interdependence

To venture into trying to understand the developing and changing

of a school subject over time is to get oneself involved in a very complex field of research. We may say that the school subject English in the period concerned, was in William Reid's wording an "educational constituency", connoting an educational area experiencing reform efforts and counter attacks as well as influencing forces of a structural, functional and intentional nature.²⁴

Summing up, two characteristics of the complexity seem pertinent to mention because they are easily overlooked in discipline orientated historical account, and because they are central to the focus of the paper: The development is a social story and a story of interaction and interdependence.

The social story includes aspects related to the subject's centrality, universality, status and relevance for further education as well as factors related to reform efforts, power constellations, fights over power, intrigues, manipulations and conspiracies linked to individuals, subgroups, institutions and organizations.²⁵ And it is through social forces mediated by human agency that structural, educational and subject matter innovation is initiated, implemented or refused.

That is why the history of a school subject is also the history of interdependence and interaction including an interdependence of educational research and practice. It is of course a matter of dispute what determinants are decisive, and to what extent human resistance and reform efforts operate on the premises of the social, cultural, economic system of society. But without taking into consideration both the structural determinants and the human agency, an historical account of a school subject's history seems incomplete.

The Historical Perspective

How can historical research, curriculum theorizing and didactic analysis combine in contributing towards a better understanding theoretically and practically of curriculum problems? Certain conclusions are tentatively put forward pertaining especially to the question of the interdependence of research and practice:

The field of curriculum belongs to society not to the curriculum professor: Historical studies like the present one

seem to indicate that the field of curriculum is society's property and not the playground of experts trying out the latest model. The practice of curriculum development, change and implementation will exist independent of any interventions from educational or other expertise. It is in realizing this fact that the contribution from the curriculum professors may be of use for praxis - especially in preparing for an eclectic use of theory.

A "test bed" for social theories of curriculum change:

It seems that historical studies have a specific contribution to make in testing out the range and convenience and appropriateness of social theories and models of explanation related to the field of curriculum, especially as a basis for an eclectic use of theory in practical situations where application of theory is indicated.

An understanding of the particular and the specific:

Historical events with their focus on the particular and the specific in concrete situations resemble the situations where curriculum guidelines are applied. In centralized school systems especially, problems are apt to arise because curricula developed for the ideal and typical school, class and pupil, are universally applied without attention being given to the "quasipractical" of the situation. A knowledge of the curriculum in practice in a historical setting covering the interaction of tradition, of a certain period of time, of the demands of society, of individual persons and of unique school situations, may contribute to an understanding of the particular and unique of today's schools and classrooms where new curricula are being implemented.²⁶

An understanding of the practical and of change as a consequence of action: Historical studies reveal the practical aspect of curriculum practice: something must be done. And it is done. But not so much on the basis of research as resulting from tradition and due to the influence of individuals and subgroups, educationally and ideologically as well as in subject matter. A realization of this may contribute towards a more realistic attitude in curriculum work stressing processes like deliberation, prudence and negotiation more than the technical aspects of curriculum development and design.

An understanding of the limitations of curriculum guidelines: Historical studies will reveal the fact that a set of innovative curriculum guidelines is not sufficient to change the practice of teaching and learning , even if new textbooks and teaching aids are provided. It is what happens in the classroom that effectuates the praxis of schooling. An understanding of the limitations of the impact of a set curriculum, may change the prevalent policy of not including related issues of a technical-professional nature as part of curriculum work.

A conscious attitude towards tradition and continuity: The impact of tradition on curriculum is taken for granted. No one will contest that continuity is secured through such influence. What is called for is, however, a more conscious reassessment of the potential tradition offers for renewal, invention and redirection". And "voyages of historical discovery" can make possible a reassessment of the social, educational, disciplinary and cultural tradition linked to school subjects , a venture that may also result in a renewed self-understanding of the field related to an awareness of "roots".²⁷

About "Roots" and Research Efforts

Curriculum theory and subject didactics have as part of the discipline of education borrowed from neighbouring disciplines as far as terminology, research methodology and central concepts are concerned. Studies into curriculum history may contribute as the field of curriculum rediscovers its roots and identity as a field of practice, research and theory production. Only fragments of a theory is envisaged, entailing , however, words and concepts that denote the specifics of the field because they emerge from the field itself.

And of course, there is always the question of pointing to areas where research should take place, not only because they are theoretically seminal, but because they over time have proved problematic as part of the practice of schooling.

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Popkewitz, Thomas S. (1987): The Formation of the School Subjects: The Struggle for Creating an American Institution, London: The Falmer Press;
Franklin, Barry M (1986): Building the American Community: The School Curriculum and the Search for Social Control, London: the Falmer Press

3. Gudem Bjørg Brandtzæg, (1986a): Skolefaget i skolereformen: Utviklingen av engelskfaget som del av skolereform og læreplanrevisjon, (The School Subject in the School Reform: The Development of English as a Part of School Reform and Curriculum Revision), Vol. 1-2, Universitetet i Oslo, ;
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Gudem, Bjørg Brandtzæg, (1989a): Engelskfaget i folkeskolen: Påvirkning og gjennomslag 1870-1970, (The School Subject English in the Common School: Influencing forces and impact 1870-1970), Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1989
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4. The first national curriculum for the basic 9-year school was presented in 1971 in the Mønsterplan, M 71. "Mønsterplan" means in this context a model plan (mønster: model, pattern). There was a slight revision in 1974 (M 74) and a major revision in 1985 (M 85) and a slight revision in 1987 (M 87) due to change of government.

5. Goodlad, John, I. and Associates, (1979), Curriculum Inquiry: The Study of Curriculum Practice, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company;
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6. See e.g. Giroux Henry, A. (1983) : Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition, Massachusetts: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc.
Goodson, Ivor F. (1983): School Subjects and Curriculum Change: Case Studies in Curriculum History, London: Croom Helm
Goodson Ivor F. ed. (1985) Social Histories of the Secondary Curriculum: Subjects for Study, London: The Falmer Press
7. See e.g. articles in Goodson, (1985);
Reid, William A. "Curriculum Theory and Curriculum Change: What Can we Learn From History?" Journal of Curriculum Studies 18 (April-June 1986), no 2, pp.159-166
8. See e.g. Atkins Elaine (1988), "Reframing curriculum theory in terms of interpretation and practice: a hermeneutical approach", Journal of Curriculum Studies, 1988, Vol 20, no 5, pp.437-448
9. Of special interest in this connection are two newly published public reports: NOU:1988:28 Med viten og vilje (With Knowledge and Willpower) and NOU 1988:32 For et lærerrikt samfunn (For a Teacher Affluent Society) (my translation) that are being publicly debated, as well as inside academic institutions.
10. See e.g. Bernstein & Lundgren, 1983; Arfwedson, Gerhard: School Codes and Teacher Work. Three Studies in Teachers' Work Context, Malmö: Liber, 1985; Goodlad et al., 1969
11. Goodlad et al., 1979
12. Inspection report from Erling Slaatto (National Archives Oslo)
13. For a fuller description see Gundem, 1988
14. See Gundem, 1986a, 1986 b and 1989. For an account of the Palmer, West and Hornby era in English language teaching, see Howatt, A.P. R. (1984): A History of English Language Teaching, London: Oxford University Press
15. For a fuller report see Gundem, B. B. (1988): "Pressure Group and Professional Activities or just Tea and Talk: The Work of the Oslo English Teachers' Association from 1938 to the 1960s. In : Seppo, S. ed. The Social Role and Evolution of the Teaching Profession in Historical Context, vol. 1V, Conference Papers for the 10th Session of the International Standing Conference for the History of Education, Joensuu, 1988, pp.107-115
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17. For a fuller account see Gundem, B.B. (1987) "Clearing House and Co-ordinating Body: The Work of the Council of Europe in the Field of Modern Language Teaching in the 1960s", in Komlosi, S., ed. (1987): History of International Relations in Education, Vol 2, Conference Papers for the 9th Session of the International Standing Conference for the History of Education, Pecs, Hungary, September, 1987

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20.Giroux, 1983

21.Ibid. s. 72-11

22.See e.g .Arfwedson ,1985 and Wallin, E. & Berg, G. (1982) :"The School as an Organization", Journal of Curriculum Studies, 14 nr.3, pp.277-286

23.For a discussion see Reid, 1986

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25. See Reid,W.A.(1984):"Curricular Topics as Institutional Categories", in Goodson, I.F. & Ball, S.J.(1985) ,eds.: Defining the Curriculum: Histories and Ethnographies,London Falmer Press,pp.67-75; Goodson, 1985

26. Compare Reid, 1986

27. Compare Reid, 1984. Draft version of Reid, 1986. Paper presented at AERA annual meeting, 1984.